

Remarks

In the official action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. As the Examiner will note with respect to claim 1, the "support platen" has been changed to --support plate-- at line 11 so that the antecedent basis is clear.

With respect to the other claims mentioned by the Examiner, namely claims 5 and 8, claims, claim 8 has been amended with an eye to overcoming the Examiner's objection and with respect to the Examiner's comments vis-a-vis claim 5, the Examiner will note that the substance of claim 5 has now been incorporated into claim 4 but, when doing so, it is believed that the Examiner's comments have been fully addressed.

The Examiner objected to claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), but indicated that claims 2, 3 and 5-9 patentably distinguished over the prior art.

The Examiner will note that claim 1 has been amended to include the limitation from claim 2, and therefore claim 1 is now essentially identical to claim 2 as originally filed. As such, it is believed that the rejection of claim 1 has been overcome.

With respect to claim 4, that claim has been converted to an independent claim and also amended to include the limitation of claim 5. As such, claim 4 basically corresponds to claim 5 as originally filed and therefore, since the Examiner indicated that claim 5 was allowable over the prior art, claim 4, which is of the same scope as original claim 5, should also be in allowable condition.

New claims 10-16 are added by this response. Since claim 10 is somewhat similar to claim 1, but without using "means" terminology, it is believed that claim 10 and its dependent claims should be in condition for allowance.

The Examiner objected to the Abstract of the disclosure. As the Examiner will note by reference to the amendments made above, the Abstract has been amended, and therefore it is hoped that the Examiner will withdraw that grounds for objection.

With the entry of this amendment, this application should now be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this application, he should feel free to telephone the undersigned.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required or credit overpayment to deposit account no. 12-0415. In particular, if this response is not timely filed, then the Commissioner is authorized to treat this response as including a petition to extend the time period pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136 (a) requesting an extension of time of the number of months necessary to make this response timely filed and the petition fee due in connection therewith may be charged to deposit account no. 12-0415.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Post Office with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Commissioner for Patents

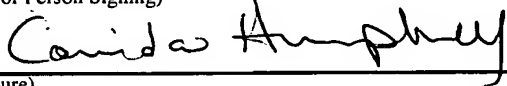
POB 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on

February 3, 2004

(Date of Deposit)

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February 3, 2004

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Respectfully submitted,


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